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An Essay

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on

Hæmorrhoids

Presented to the Medical Faculty,

of
The University of Pennsylvania
for

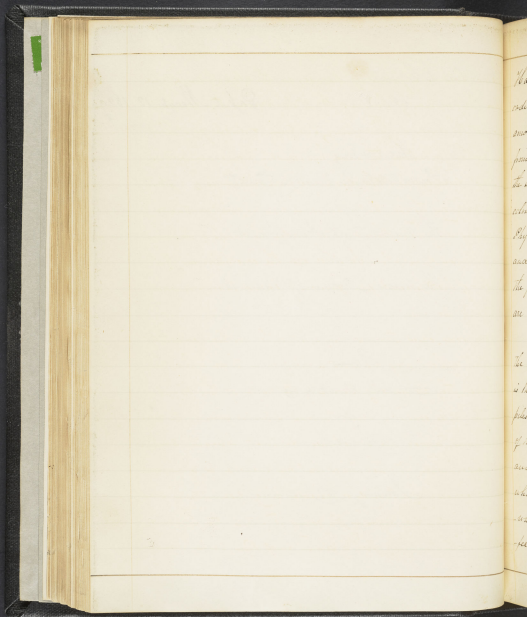
The degree of Doctor of Medicine.

By

Jos. P. Adams

of
South Carolina

January 1829 —



Hæmorrhoids is a genus of disease, in the class Pyrexia, and order Phlegmasia, of Cullen. By Dr. Chapman it is ranked amongst the diseases of the circulatory system. A discharge of blood from without or within the anus, has usually been considered as the same disease, when the discharge from within is of a florid colour, showing thereby that it has come from a great distance. Physicians designate these varieties under the names of External, and Internal Hæmorrhoids. In either case the conclusion is, that the flow of blood proceeds from previously formed tumours, which are termed the piles.

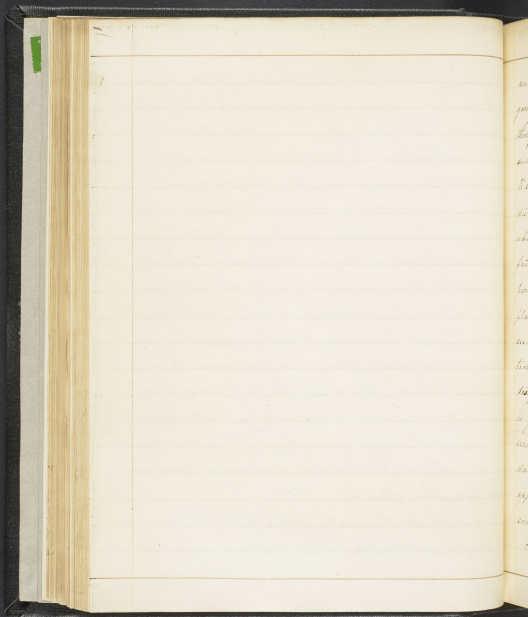
In some cases, tumours may exist either within or without the anus, without any discharge of blood from them; when this is the case, they are usually known by the name of the blind piles. The piles consist of small tumours situated around the verge of the anus, which are sometimes distinct, separate, round, and prominent. At other times but one tumour is apparent which consists of a tumid or varicose ring, resembling somewhat a protruded anus. On going to stool, the person affected with the piles, feels a smart and then pain and



tumours appear about the verge of the anus. If these tumours break, great relief is immediately experienced, but should they remain entire, the patient suffers extreme pain. They sometimes become so large as to press upon the bladder and excite considerable pain and irritation in voiding the urine.

They may appear without any previous disarrangement in the system, from topical causes, but most frequently it happens that patient experiences various disorders, such as head-ache, sick stomach, flatulency, and stupor, together with pains in the back and loins, accompanied with a greater or less degree of Dysuria. In addition to these symptoms, there exists also a sense of fulness, itching, and pain around the anus. Sometimes preceding this disease, there is a discharge of a serous fluid, accompanied by some swelling, which appears to supersede the necessity of a discharge of blood, and thereby relieves the patient. This serous discharge is denominated Hemorrhoids albae.

As it respects the quantity of blood discharged there can be specified no stated rule, as it is sometimes very profuse.



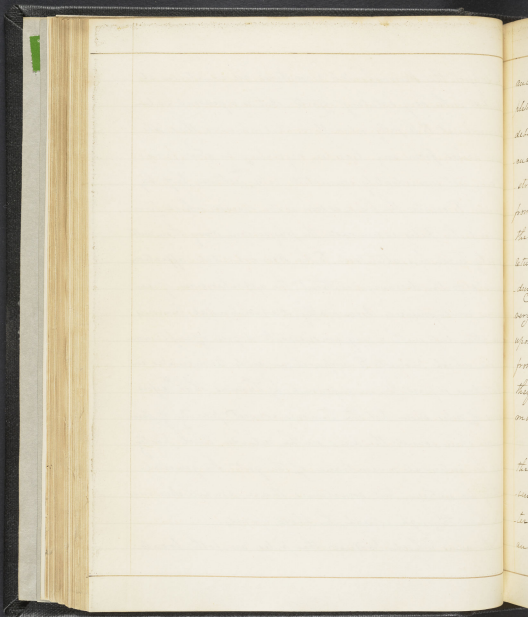
and at other times quite inconsiderable. The discharge generally takes place while the person affected is at stool, though it not unfrequently happens immediately after stool and in some rare instances where there has been no attempt to evacuate the alimentary canal. By frequent and copious discharges, great debility is produced. Instances are stated where the discharge has been so profuse as to prove suddenly fatal. The piles after long continuance sometimes become periodical and the discharge only at regular periods takes place. This disease sometimes exists for a number of years without much inconvenience to the patient (excepting the trouble produced by the regular discharges) and suddenly disappears towards the decline of life. In such cases it is generally followed by some other disease of a more serious and alarming nature. The piles though seldom dangerous should always be checked as soon as they appear, as they very seldom fail to give the patient some considerable trouble and inconvenience.

It is a well attested fact, as far as I am informed on



The subject, that Hemorrhoidal evacuations are sometimes attended with very salutary effects. But as a general rule I conceive it to be fully admitted, that whenever this disease arises from any disorder originating in other functions, not immediately connected with ^{the} rectum, but sufficient to create the piles, as soon as the disease which produced the piles is removed, the physician may then with safety turn his attention to the Hemorrhoidal affection, and stop the discharge without the apprehension of serious consequences. Occasionally Hemorrhoidal tumours are attended with a very considerable degree of inflammation, which proceeds to suppuration and terminates in fistulous ulcers. We are informed by Thomas that dissections of piles show that the tumours consist partly of the fine skin round the anus on the outside and partly of the internal membrane of the gut. In general they are entire, but sometimes have small openings in them through which the blood issues.

The causes which produce the piles are both local



and general. It is occasioned by habitual costiveness, sickness, even scurvy on horseback, intemperance and debauchery, the suppression of some long continued evacuation, and the use of strong astringent purges. An obstruction in the liver, preventing the return of blood from the hemorrhoidal vessels through that organ, is often the cause of the piles. Every thing, which prevents the return of blood from the hemorrhoidal vessels, has a tendency to produce the piles. Thus pregnant women are very liable to the piles, occasioned by the uterus pressing upon the rectum which prevents the return of blood from that part, together with the costiveness to which they are liable. Persons subject to prolapsus ani are more particularly liable to the piles.

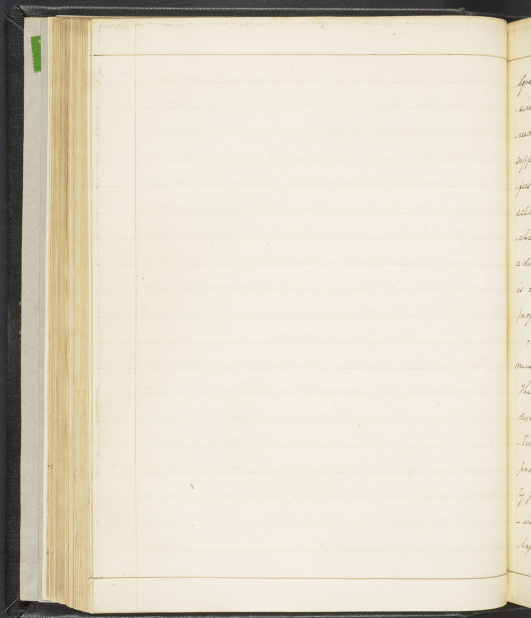
In all cases where the internal membrane of the rectum is protruded in voiding feces and prevented from returning by the contraction of the sphincter ani muscle, the blood must necessarily be retained and inflammation ensue. —

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Females, who have borne children, are more subject to the piles than those who have not. Generally, about the time menstruation ceases, women suffer considerably from Hemorrhoidal affections. In all cases where there is pressure upon the pelvic viscera, of course there must be an undue determination of blood to that part and consequently dilatation of its vessels, which according to Hodge is the primary cause of Hemorrhoids. Persons of a robust habit, who lead a sedentary life, are frequently troubled with the piles. When once affected with the piles, the patient is liable to subsequent attacks.

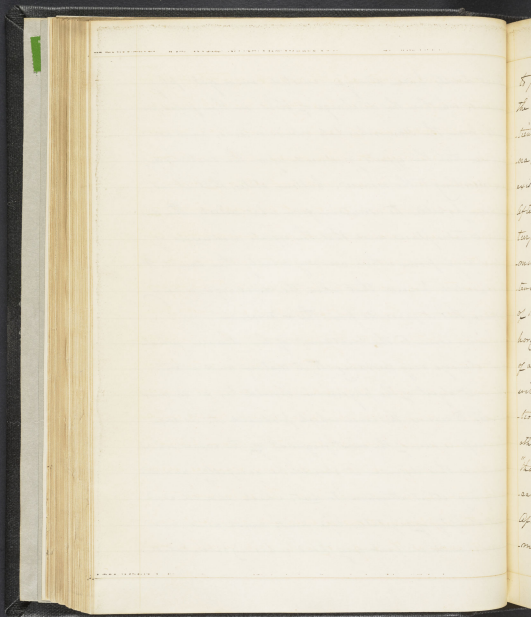
When the piles proceed so far as to become systematic, they become intimately connected with the stomach, so that certain affections in the one will produce disorder in the other. Baldwells in his notes to Cullen thus expresses himself, "We have never seen a severe case of Hemorrhoidal flux, that was not very obviously connected with the stomach. When of a gouty character it is necessarily so connected." —

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great doubt has always existed amongst physicians, whether the discharge of blood in the piles proceeds from the hemorrhoidal arteries or veins, and some suppose that the effects produced upon the system, differ according to the source. Gallien states, that it is seldom possible to ascertain from what vessels the discharge takes place, and that the effects produced by a discharge from either are very nearly the same. It is conceded however that when the discharge is very profuse, that it proceeds from the arteries. —

I now come to the treatment of this disease, which must always vary according to its nature and extent. The first object of the physician should be, as in most diseases, to remove the cause which produces it. As constipation is one of the most frequent of the causes which produces this disease, it should be carefully avoided by paying strict attention to diet, which should consist chiefly of vegetables, ripe fruit, muck and molasses; and in fact any food which is calculated

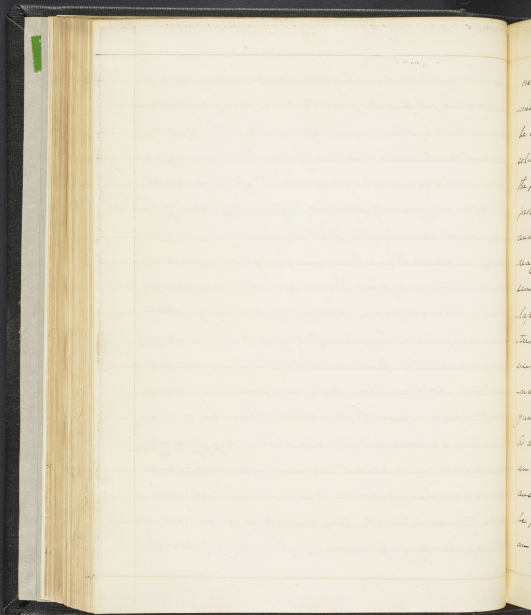


to produce such stools as will pass off without irritating
the rectum, may be taken with safety. If this fail the pa-
tient should make use of gentle lavatives, such as man-
na,enna, castor-oil, &c. When much inflammation
exists hemorrhoids will be found productive of benefit.
After the inflammation is somewhat subdued, spirits of
turpentine and balsam capivi will answer well, ad-
ministered internally. When very great inflammation at-
tends the tumours, leeches should be applied to the verge
of the anus and the patient should be confined to the
horizontal posture. After they are removed, the application
of a soft compress dipped into some astringent solution
will be found highly beneficial. Cold astringent injec-
tions will often prove serviceable when leeches and
other prescriptions have failed. Dr Chapman states
"that from analogy we would suppose conies ser-
viceable, though he has never tried the experiment."
After the inflammation is subdued different oint-
ments, such as the sugar of lead, galls, and tar oint-

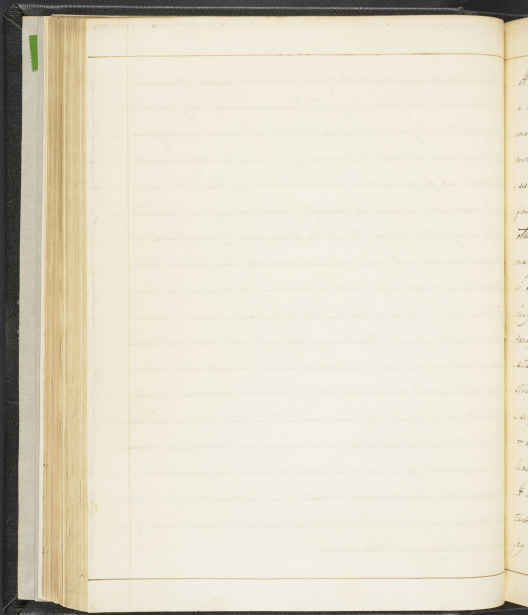
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ments, may be used with considerable advantage. Rubbing the parts with fresh lard is highly extolled and with some claims the preference over the different ointments recommended above. The steam of warm water will also be found useful. Dr. McLean states that after a long and judicious treatment of a case of the piles, which occurred in his practice and which resisted all of his efforts. Effect a cure, almost immediately being obtained from the use of the tincture of digitalis, which was given morning and evening, the dose being from thirty to forty drops. It sometimes happens however that tumours exist without much inflammation, but from their bulk and protrusion, produce great inconvenience to the patient. When this is the case they should be returned, which may generally be effected by the patient assuming the horizontal posture and using gentle pressure with his fingers. After they are returned, they should be prevented from again protruding by means of a pad, being placed



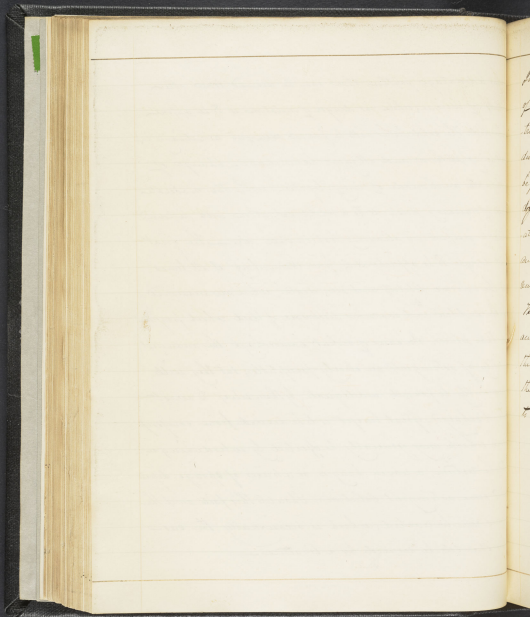
over the anus and secured by the collar. Should these tri-
-cious resist the patients efforts to return them they must
be supported by a soft compress dipped in some anodyne
solution and retained by means of a proper bandage over
the parts. A frequent and common cause of the piles is
prolapsus ani, which is generally occasioned by voiding hard
and bulky stools. When this is the case, some of laxatives al-
ready pointed out will be found useful, the diet at the
same time being light and digestible. If however the pro-
lapsus ani, which causes the piles, proceeds from a pro-
-trusional cavity of the rectum, the internal and external
use of astringents will be found highly useful. The inter-
-nal astringents recommended by Caldwell are alum and
gum kino, to which may be added the extract of peruvian
In an internal application, a solution of sugar of lead,
an infusion of galls, or tannin will be found to
answer best. The remedies pointed out above will generally
be found adequate to arrest hemorrhoidal affections of
an ordinary nature. —



It happens frequently that the piles from neglect become
a systematic affection. When however any improvement is
made upon the system, the remedies already pointed out
will be found no less useful, than in the particular ca-
ses to which they have been applied. They will not be
found entirely sufficient however but should be aided by
other assistants which I shall point out. As plethorism
is one of the principal predisposing causes of the piles and
is calculated greatly to increase the discharges, render-
ing them habitual, the patient should be particularly
careful to avoid leading a sedentary life, should ab-
stain from the use of all spirituous liquors, and pay
strict attention to his diet. He should exercise him-
self freely in the open air, either in carriages, on foot
or on horseback. The propriety of exercising on horseback
has been doubted by some and highly extolled by others.
I would appear to a more observer, who has never tes-
ted its virtues by experience, that it would have a tenden-
cy to irritate the parts, without procuring to the patient

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any advantage farther than can be derived from other
kinds of exercise, when no danger of incision is to be apprehended.
The cold bath will be found successful auxiliary in
arresting plethora and allaying hemorrhage. Change of
climate and mode of living, together with the moderate
use of mercury, pushed to a mild salivation, will be found
highly useful in allaying habituated piles. The great
est danger to be apprehended from hemorrhoids at all times
is the extreme debility and even death, which are occasioned
by the sudden and copious discharges of blood which frequent-
ly take place. In cases of violent hemorrhage the manifi-
estation of astringents are clearly perceptible, but they will
frequently be found inadequate by themselves to arrest
the discharge. Great benefit is to be derived from escharo-
tics, which may generally be effected by introducing in
the rectum a waxen bougie or a piece of sponge dipped
in some astringent solution. Should this fail and the
piles can be worked, which is occasionally the case,
they should be secured by a ligature.



In conclusion, I will observe, that in the treatment of the piles generally from its insipidity to its onset protracted state, the obvious necessity of cold drinks and light diet, is clearly manifested, nor can too much attention be paid thereto. When the piles proceed so far as to produce dyspepsia, headache, and to turn the skin pale; Remote great debility and weakness together with bad breath and other threatening symptoms, nothing short of a removal of the tumour will be found to answer—

The two modes of removing them are with the knife and ligature, but as I did not intend entering upon the surgical treatment of this disease, I now discontinue the subject, claiming that indulgence which is due to my ignorance. I am &c

